



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **U.S. CHARGES CHINESE LANGUAGE INTERPRETER WITH OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE FOR DISCLOSING FEDERAL WIRETAP**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, SALVATORE DALESSANDRO, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), MARK J. MERSHON, the Assistant Director in Charge of the New York Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), RAYMOND W. KELLY, Commissioner of the New York City Police Department ("NYPD") announced that JIMMY ZHENG has been charged in a criminal complaint filed in Manhattan federal court with obstruction of justice for revealing the existence of an ongoing federal wiretap to a relative so that the relative would not be intercepted over the wiretap and face potential criminal charges.

According to the criminal complaint, which was unsealed today, members of an ICE, FBI and NYPD task force were investigating the Lim Shang Organization, a violent Asian organized crime group operating in Manhattan's Chinatown and Flushing, New York. As part of that investigation, ICE obtained court-authorization to intercept wire communications occurring over various cell phones used by members of the Lim Shang Organization (Operation Panda).<sup>1</sup> Further, because the targets of the investigation primarily spoke the Fuzhou dialect of the Chinese language, Chinese language interpreters were hired through an outside contractor to translate the intercepted communications for law enforcement. According to the complaint, one of these interpreters was JIMMY ZHENG, the defendant.

As explained in the complaint, on two occasions during the course of the wiretap, Federal agents specifically asked ZHENG if he (or any other interpreters) knew or recognized any of the subjects of the investigation who had been intercepted. On both occasions, ZHENG denied knowing any of the interceptees.

However, during a June 2005 interview with the Federal Agents, ZHENG admitted that he had been introduced by his cousin to one of the main targets of the investigation, Lim Shang, several months before the wiretap began. Specifically, ZHENG had spent an evening at a nightclub with Lim Shang and Lim Shang's sister, Li Ping Wong, a/k/a "Li Zhi." ZHENG subsequently had frequent contact

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<sup>1</sup> In November 2004, Lim Shang and approximately 20 other defendants were charged with racketeering and other offenses in the case of United States v. Lim Shang, et al., 04 Cr. 1205 (BSJ). That case remains pending.

with “Li Zhi,” and also had contact with another individual intercepted during the investigation, whom he knew as “Big Sister.”

According to the complaint, in or about June 2004, ZHENG’s cousin contacted ZHENG and informed ZHENG that “Big Sister” had called. ZHENG then told his cousin that “Big Sister” had been overheard on a wiretap of Lim Shang’s telephone. According to ZHENG, and as related in the complaint, the reason ZHENG told his cousin about the wiretap and the identities of some of the targets was that he did not want his cousin to get in any trouble. ZHENG further admitted that he lied to the Federal Agents when he had been interviewed in June and August of 2004 by falsely stating that he did not know any of the interceptees on the wiretap.

“Releasing sensitive information regarding Federal investigations is a serious crime that can impact public safety by undermining law enforcement efforts,” said Dalessandro. “Interpreters are hired into trusted positions and according to this complaint, the defendant abused that trust and put our efforts in potential jeopardy.”

ZHENG, 32, resides in Sewell, New Jersey.

ZHENG is scheduled to be presented on the criminal complaint before United States Magistrate Judge MICHAEL H. DOLINGER today. He faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison and the greater of a fine of \$250,000 fine or twice the gross gain or loss resulting from the offense.

Mr. KELLEY praised the efforts of ICE, the FBI, and the NYPD in this case.

Assistant United States Attorneys JONATHAN S. KOLODNER and SCOTT L. MARRAH are in charge of the prosecution.

The information contained in this release was taken from a U.S. Attorney’s news release from the Southern District of New York.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). ICE seeks to prevent acts of terrorism by targeting the people, money and materials that support terror and criminal networks.*